

H. Res. 558

In the House of Representatives, U.S.,

March 30, 2004.

Whereas since 1949 the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has played an essential role in guaranteeing the security, freedom, and prosperity of the United States and its allies in Europe and North America;

Whereas since 1994 Congress has repeatedly endorsed the enlargement of NATO through the NATO Participation Act of 1994, the NATO Enlargement Facilitation Act of 1996, the European Security Act of 1998, the Gerald B. H. Solomon Freedom Consolidation Act of 2002, the Transatlantic Security and NATO Enhancement Resolution of 2002, and House Concurrent Resolution 209 (2003);

Whereas NATO heads of state and government, meeting in Prague on November 21, 2002, invited Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia to commence accession negotiations with NATO;

Whereas on March 26, 2003, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia signed accession protocols to the Washington Treaty of 1949;

Whereas on May 8, 2003, the Senate voted 96–0 to give its advice and consent to ratification by the United States of the seven accession protocols;

Whereas on March 2, 2004, NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer announced that all 19 NATO members had deposited with the United States Government their instruments of ratification of the accession protocols;

Whereas Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia have reformed their political and economic systems in preparation for NATO membership;

Whereas Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia have undertaken defense reform programs that will enable each country to contribute to NATO operations and are working to meet the financial responsibilities of NATO membership by spending or committing to spend at least two percent of their gross domestic product on defense;

Whereas Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia have contributed to military operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq;

Whereas Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia became members of NATO on March 29, 2004, and are expected to be welcomed by NATO heads of state and government when they meet in Istanbul on June 28 and 29, 2004;

Whereas Albania, Croatia, and Macedonia, the remaining countries currently in NATO's Membership Action Plan, signed the United States-Adriatic Charter on May 2, 2003, thereby affirming their commitment to the values and principles of NATO, their willingness to contribute to the peace and security of southeast Europe, and their desire to join the Alliance at the earliest possible time;

Whereas in 2003 Congress, in House Concurrent Resolution 209, urged NATO to invite Albania, Croatia, and Macedonia to join NATO as soon as each of these countries respectively demonstrates the ability to assume the responsibilities of NATO membership through the Membership Action Plan;

Whereas the Governments of Albania and Macedonia supported Operation Iraqi Freedom and are contributing forces to stabilization operations in Iraq and to the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan; and

Whereas the Government of Croatia elected in November 2003 has demonstrated its commitment to implementing reforms and meeting conditions for integration into Euro-Atlantic institutions, including the defense reforms necessary for NATO membership, and has contributed forces to the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) welcomes with enthusiasm the accession of Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO);

(2) reaffirms that the process of NATO enlargement enhances the security of the United States and the entire North Atlantic area;

(3) agrees that the process of NATO enlargement should remain open to potential membership by any interested European democracy that meets the criteria for

NATO membership as set forth in the 1995 Study on NATO Enlargement and whose admission would further the principles of the Washington Treaty of 1949 and would enhance security in the North Atlantic area; and

(4) recommends that NATO heads of state and government, meeting at Istanbul on June 28 and 29, 2004, should agree to review the enlargement process, including the applications of Albania, Croatia, and Macedonia, at a summit meeting to be held no later than 2007.

Attest:

Clerk.